are to hold consultations, exchange information on trade, review the development of trade, identify areas of mutual interest, recommend measures aimed at the expansion and diversification of trade.

(c) The volume of trade between India and Myanmar during the year 2002-03 was of the order of US$ 411 million. Quantity-wise data is not available. Value-wise data for major trade commodities for the period 2002-03 is as follows :–

Export to Myanmar

(Value in US$ million)

Sl. No.	Commodity	Value
1.	Primary & semi-finished iron and steel	14.72
2.	Drugs, pharmaceuticals & fine chemicals	12.85
3.	Machinery & instruments	8.08

Import from Myanmar

Sl. No.	Commodity	Value
1.	Pulses	201.40
2.	Wood & wood products	92.04
3.	Other commodities	35.57

Transit business through Bangladesh

2725. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether talks are on with the Government of Bangladesh to introduce transit business and passage of goods from the North Eastern States to the other parts of the country through Bangladesh;

(b) whether people of Tripura would be allowed to go to Kolkata through Bangladesh on transit visa; and

(c) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) In terms of Article VIII of the Trade Agreement between India and Bangladesh, the

two Governments have agreed to make mutually beneficial arrangements for the use of their waterways, railways and roadways for commerce between the two countries and for passage of goods between the two places in one country through the territory of the other.

During the 5th meeting of India-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission held in March, 1997, it was decided to set up a Group of Experts to examine and make recommendations on the issue of border trade. Two other issues namely transshipment of goods from one point in India to another through Bangladesh territory in pursuance of Article VIII of the bilateral Trade Agreement and deepening of tariff concessions were also assigned to this Group at the meeting of the two Commerce Ministers in 1999.

During subsequent bilateral discussions, however, Bangladesh side did not agree to discuss transshipment.

(b) and (c) The provisions in the Agreement on revised Travel Arrangement between India and Bangladesh provide that nationals of one country transiting through the other country by land, river or air routes will be required to have a transit visa to be availed of within one month of its issue, valid for a stay upto a maximum of 15 days from the date of entry subject to the production of one way confirmed air/bus ticket.

Need for common market in South Asia on the pattern of EU

2726. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Minister of External Affairs, while addressing a trade delegation from Pakistan alongwith the representatives of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in New Delhi on 7th June, 2003, stressed the need for forming a common market in South Asia on the pattern of European Union (EU);

(b) if so, what was the Pak delegation's and Pak Government's response thereto; and

(c) the steps taken by Government on their own towards formation of such a union/common market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) Minister